



Clamp down now, ensure security

EC asks law enforcers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid worries over deteriorating law and order ahead of the national polls, the Election Commission yesterday ordered law enforcers to set up more checkpoints, crack down on organised crime, and recover illegal or missing firearms and ammunition.

The instructions came in the wake of Friday's attempt on the life of Dhaka-8 aspirant Sharif Osman Hadi. The attack on the Inqilab Mondho spokesperson, a day after the EC unveiled the polls schedule, has further stoked fears among the public and political leaders.

At an emergency meeting with top law enforcement officials yesterday afternoon, the EC discussed plans to neutralise security threats in the run-up to the February 12 election.

After the meeting, held at its Agargaon headquarters, the commission said it was not ruling out the possibility

- Chance of covert attacks there but polls to be held as scheduled: EC
- Politicians, July frontliners to get police protocol

of further "covert attacks" but stressed that there were no concerns about the election itself and that it would be held as scheduled.

Referring to the shooting of Hadi, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin told the meeting that it "felt like a bolt of lightning striking my head."

"I had announced the schedule the previous day [Thursday], and the very next day this incident occurred. It's extremely tragic," he added.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday

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Young school students paying tribute to martyred intellectuals killed during the 1971 Liberation War at the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in the capital, as people from all walks of life observed Martyred Intellectuals Day yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Country pays tribute to martyred intellectuals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation yesterday observed Martyred Intellectuals Day, paying tribute to the eminent citizens who were brutally killed during the 1971 Liberation War.

On December 14, 1971, the Pakistan army and its local collaborators abducted and murdered leading academics, writers, journalists, doctors and professionals in an apparent bid to cripple the intellectual backbone of the emerging nation, just days before Bangladesh achieved independence.

The government and various political, social and cultural organisations marked the day with programmes across the country.

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'Anti-Bangladesh activities from India must stop'

Dhaka summons Indian envoy; Delhi refutes claim

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The foreign ministry yesterday summoned Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma to convey Bangladesh's strong concerns over India allowing deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina to continue making "incendiary" statements while on Indian soil.

In a statement, the ministry said Hasina, a fugitive, has been calling on her supporters to engage in terrorist activities aimed at destabilising the country and derailing the upcoming national elections.

It also drew the Indian envoy's attention to "anti-Bangladesh activities" by fugitive Awami League members currently based in India. "These activities include planning, organising and facilitating terrorist acts inside Bangladesh with the objective of disrupting the forthcoming elections."

"The Indian government was called upon to expeditiously act to end the criminal actions by these fascist terrorists and extradite them to Bangladesh as soon as possible," the statement said.

India's Ministry of External Affairs has, however, "rejected" the assertions made in the statement.

The Bangladesh foreign ministry's statement reiterated its demand for the immediate extradition of Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal so they can face the

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Hadi to be flown to Singapore today

8 held; prime suspects still at large

TOUSIF KAIUM and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Sharif Osman Hadi, an independent MP aspirant for Dhaka-8 who was shot in broad daylight in the capital's Paltan area on Friday, will be flown to Singapore today by air ambulance for advanced treatment.

The decision was taken last night following an emergency meeting held virtually at the instruction of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, said the Chief Adviser's Press Wing.

Over the past two days, the government contacted several hospitals in Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia regarding Hadi's treatment.

After consultations with Evercare Hospital's specialist team and discussions with family members, the matter was placed before the chief adviser.

Prof Dr Sayedur Rahman of Evercare Hospital said Hadi's condition is currently stable and unchanged.

Three days after the shooting, law enforcement agencies yesterday arrested eight people but had yet to apprehend the prime suspect, Faisal Karim Masud, and his associate, Alamgir Sheikh, while sources say the two may have already fled to India.

The Chief Adviser's Office said it has requested the Indian High Commissioner to seek cooperation from the Indian government to prevent the suspects from crossing the border and to take immediate action to arrest and extradite them if they enter Indian territory.

To block their escape, photographs and details of the suspects were circulated to all immigration checkpoints. Patrols by BGB and Rab have also been intensified along the border areas.

According to Detective Branch (DB) sources, Faisal and Alamgir may have left Bangladesh early Saturday via the Garo Palli and Dhobaura border points in Mymensingh, just hours after the shooting.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, three DB officers said the suspects first went to Savar and stayed there till around 8:30pm.

Police conducted a drive in Savar, including a resort where they had previously stayed, but the suspects left before police arrived.

They then hired a private car, proceeded to Haluaghat in



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Reform commission chiefs frustrated over inaction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chiefs and members of several reform commissions expressed frustration yesterday over the government's failure to implement the proposals they had submitted.

They said that a unique opportunity was created after the July uprising, but the government did

the progress of various reform initiatives across different sectors and monitor implementation over time.

Iftikharuzzaman, head of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Reform Commission, said that his commission had proposed a simple yet crucial reform: forming a committee to review the ACC's activities every three months and

recommendation we made."

However, Iftikharuzzaman expressed disappointment that this provision was later removed.

Although most of the proposals had broad support from political parties, including key oversight mechanisms, many were not enforced.

"I did not get a clear answer when I

BANGLADESH REFORM TRACKER	STATE OF REFORMS				
	STAGE-1 Reform proposed	STAGE-2 Reform initiated	STAGE-3 Legal & policy formulation	STAGE-4 Operationalisation	STAGE-5 Action implementation
Anti-corruption	24	23	0	0	0
Electoral process	13	3	8	5	2
Labour	11	1	11	0	0
Media	14	11	1	1	0

not take advantage of it, leaving many key reforms unaddressed.

The comments came during the inauguration of the Bangladesh Reform Tracker by the Citizens Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh at the China-Bangladesh Friendship Conference Centre.

The platform is designed to track

present a public accountability report.

"Currently, complaints are reviewed internally and reported annually to the president. This process does not ensure transparency. Our proposal for quarterly public reviews was the most important

asked who the forces resisting reform are -- I am saying it clearly now. The resistance exists among us. It is present in politics, bureaucracy, civil society, media and business. But the biggest resistance, without hesitation, comes from political forces."

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The call that never came

Laments wife of peacekeeper killed in Sudan; grief sweeps families as news reaches home

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

On Saturday afternoon, 30-year-old corporal Masud Rana had told his wife that he would call again after a short rest before heading back to work.

But that conversation turned out to be their last.

Later in the evening, his family in

down as she recalled speaking to her son just the day before. "When I asked about his duty, he said, 'Maa, you know it's not so difficult these days.' He told me to stay well. That was the last thing he said."

Masud's wife, Asmaul Husna Ankhi, was still stunned by the news.

"I just spoke to him yesterday

EC adds ICT charge-based disqualification for elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday issued a circular on candidate eligibility and disqualification for the next national polls, adding a provision barring anyone from contesting if a formal charge has been filed against them at the International Crimes Tribunals.

According to the circular, if a formal charge is submitted against any person under Section 9(1) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, that individual will be disqualified under Section 20 of the same law from being elected as a member of parliament or from continuing in office as an MP.

The EC also issued a letter on maintaining the electoral environment during the pre-election period, stating that, as per the announced schedule, the election will be held on February 12.

In this context, under



Masud Rana Mominul Islam Shamim Reza Santo Mondal Jahangir Alam Sabuj Miya

Natore learnt that Masud was among six peacekeepers from the Bangladesh Army killed in a drone attack on a United Nations base in Sudan.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations, the attack was carried out by a separatist armed group between 3:40pm and 3:50pm (local time), while the peacekeepers were on duty at the base.

A pall of grief has since fallen over Boaliapara village in Natore's Lalpur upazila, where Masud's family lives.

His mother, Marjin Begum, broke

[Saturday] afternoon. He said he would call me again after resting for half an hour before going on duty. I waited. That half hour never passed," she said.

Masud joined the army in 2006. His two brothers are also serving in the army. He left for Sudan on November 7, leaving behind his wife and eight-year-old daughter.

The ISPR said the six peacekeepers were killed and eight others injured in a drone attack on the Kadugli Logistics Base in Sudan's Abyei region on Saturday.

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